

Balyang Way Reserve Engagement Responses

A Participate Hume page was available from 4 – 25 September 2023 for the local community to share feedback on a concept for Balyang Way Reserve. Postcards were sent to the 198 households within a 500-metre radius of the park informing them of the consultation opportunity.

The page containing the consultation attracted 80 visitors which is 40.4% of households in the targeted area. Of the 80 unique visitors, 12 (15.0%) left feedback. This reflects 6.1% of the 198 households.

This feedback helps Council to understand what is important to the community and why, as well as identify any other opportunities for improvements. The feedback was reviewed and was used to update the play space design.

The below table is a summary of the community's suggestions and other feedback. Council have reviewed and provided a response as it relates to the project's scope and budget.

Comment/ Theme	Number of comments on the subject	Hume City Council Review Response
<i>Request to retain planting</i>	1	Whilst some of the larger shrubs and thick strappy plants will be rationalized, all trees will be retained, and additional trees have been identified to retain the character of the reserve, provide shade, and improve supervision.
<i>Request to retain the see saw</i>	3	Whilst the existing see saw is ageing and needs to be replaced, a see saw play option will be further investigated.

<i>Snake safety in reserve</i>	1	Areas of the existing garden beds are proposed to be rationalized to allow for better visibility where snakes may hide. We understand that snakes are a concern to many parents, however we also receive numerous requests for more natural experiences around our playspaces. Where playspaces are integrated more closely with the natural environment, such as this park, some interaction between wildlife, including snakes, and families is inevitable. Ultimately Council feels that while the benefits of exposing children to nature exceed the risks in many cases, we understand that for various reasons individual families may need to make a different assessment. For snake safety around Hume, please see: https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Residents/Pets-and-Animals/Native-Animals
<i>Request for shade sails</i>	2	Typically, shade sails are not placed over public play equipment. We aim to shade playspaces with tree planting. All trees will be retained, and additional trees have been identified to retain the character of the reserve and provide further shade.
<i>Request for flying Fox</i>	1	Balyang Way Reserve is a small reserve and flying foxes take up a large footprint plus additional area around it required to meet Australian Standards. Unfortunately, it cannot be accommodated at this reserve.
<i>Request for additional set of swings</i>	1	Balyang Way Reserve is a local level park providing small scale play opportunities. Additional play elements such as swings require fall zones around the equipment to protect the users.

<i>Request for more shelter cover over BBQ</i>	1	The cost of either additional or modifications to the existing shelter, exceed the benefit and would result in less budget for play equipment.
<i>Request regarding seating arrangement</i>	1	Seating opportunities will be further investigated.
<i>Request for new Bin</i>	1	Rubbish bin will be replaced and relocated closer to pathway.
<i>Request for new BBQ and additional picnic facilities</i>	3	The park is a small space which caters for short visits by local residents within walking distance of the park. BBQs are usually located in larger reserves where facilities such as toilets are also provided
<i>Request for fencing around reserve for kids' safety</i>	1	Balyang Way Reserve is low traffic volume street, and so alternative techniques have been used to achieve barriers including maintaining the trees and introducing additional trees.
<i>Request for perimeter path</i>	1	A loop path was investigated in the development of the concept, but it cannot be accommodated without damaging the existing tree roots and so may not be viable.
<i>Request for walking trail through grassland</i>	2	A Walking trail is outside the scope of this project. The concept indicates the northern access point from the reserve to the grasslands as being closed off as part of the upgrade. Balyang Way Reserve sits adjacent to Amberfield Wildflower

		Grassland Reserve, which is home to the vulnerable Golden Sun Moth, as well as the threatened Amethyst Hairstreak Butterfly and Matted Flax-lily. To conserve and protect the natural and scientific values within the grassland reserve, a conservation covenant has been placed on the property. This permanent, legally binding agreement restricts certain activities that might damage the native vegetation and/or habitat for wildlife. Allowing people to walk through the grassland as a short cut to access Craigieburn Road, is causing damage to the fragile ecosystem, through the loss of native vegetation and the compaction of soil due to repetitive use, as well as the introduction of weeds. Restricting public access into the reserve will ensure the ongoing protection of this significant ecosystem. Amberfield Wildflower Grassland Reserve is a dog prohibited area. Information on Hume's environmental programs: https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Residents/Environment
<i>Request for toilet</i>	2	Balyang Way Reserve is a small-scale reserve and does not meet the criteria for a public toilet, which are typically installed in district and regional reserves with high visitation and where people may drive to, and spend an extended time at the space.
<i>Request for rubber in fall zones instead of mulch</i>	1	Soft fall mulch is a commonly used material in playspaces as it provides a safe landing surface that can be replenished and has the benefit of not overheating on hot days like large areas of soft rubber. A permeable rubber tile safety surface will be placed under high use areas such as under swings and slide run off areas.

<i>Request for small bicycle track</i>	1	The small scale of Balyang Way Reserve and existing established trees limits what can be included, whilst still allowing for a variety of play elements. A bike track is typically located in larger reserves.
<i>Request to prevent dogs in the park</i>	1	Dogs should be under effective control at all times, on a short leash within 50m of a playspace, and are prohibited within the boundary of a playspace at all times Please contact Customer Service to report any activity that isn't in line with the above on.